

# Brentwood Ursuline Convent High School Policy



## Sixth Form (aged 16-19 years) Bursary Fund Procedure

### Introduction

Brentwood Ursuline is committed to being an inclusive Catholic community in which all students can 'grow in personality, relationships, knowledge and skills towards a full realisation of their potential' (Mission Statement). We want to offer the benefits of an Ursuline education to all suitably qualified young people, regardless of their financial circumstances, and bursaries are intended to help achieve this aim.

There are 2 types of 16-19 bursaries:-

1. Bursaries for defined **vulnerable** groups of up to £1,200 a year
2. **Discretionary** bursaries awarded to students to meet individual needs. For example transport, meals, books and equipment

### Vulnerable Group Bursary

To apply for this bursary a student must meet one of the 4 criteria below and have a financial need:-

1. In care
2. Care leavers
3. Receiving income support of universal credit because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and someone is dependent on them and living with them.
4. Receiving a Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right.

Please note that to qualify as eligible for a vulnerable student payment the student does not have to be living independently. The student can claim Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right.

The school will require proof of the above to show that a student is eligible and will retain copies of the evidence provided.

### Discretionary Bursaries

Discretionary bursary awards are made to students to help them overcome the individual barriers to participation, for example, to help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment. These bursaries can be for whatever amount is deemed necessary and the school will decide which students will be awarded a bursary. However the school will direct bursaries towards students who cannot succeed in education without financial help for things like transport, meals, books and equipment.

Students applying for this bursary will be assessed individually and awarded a bursary based on their actual financial need. An assessment will need to be repeated for each year the student applies for a bursary.

Below are some examples of eligibility criteria for this bursary:-

1. Household income of less than **£25,000**, using Tax Credits Form (TC602), evidence of income from self-employment, a P60, or 3-6 month's worth of bank statements as evidence.
2. Low income households may get more support depending on their needs such as bus or train passes, money for educational visits and contributions to the costs of attending university open days and interviews.
3. Wider family circumstances, including whether the student is from a single parent, is a carer or where there are a lot of other children in the family.
4. Students with high course costs. This includes courses where specialist clothing or equipment are required.

All decisions about which students receive a discretionary bursary and how much they receive will be based on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need.

A small emergency fund from the discretionary allocation will be retained to support students who experience exceptional circumstances during the year that impact on their ability to participate

### **Payment of Bursary Funding**

The bursary fund is intended to remove specific barriers to participation. We do not insist that bursary is used for travel costs, meals or equipment but can be used in any other way to offer support that has been identified as necessary to enable the student to benefit from their education.

We will pay in-kind bursaries rather than cash where possible and there is no restriction on what in-kind payment can be for, although examples could include travel, meals and courses materials/field trips. Any payment being made direct to the student will be paid direct into the student's account via BACS.

There is no limit to the amount of discretionary payment that can be awarded as long as we stay within our overall budget. Bursaries will be sufficient to help the students meet their costs of participation and may be used also towards costs of attending university interviews and open days. Any IT equipment purchased for a bursary student, ie a laptop or tablet, should be returned once the study programme has been completed so it can be used by another student.

### **Conditions to receiving bursary funding.**

Payment of the vulnerable and discretionary bursary will be conditional on the student meeting some agreed standards. These standards are set by the school and relate to attendance and standards of behaviour and effort. Attendance to be 95% and above, and Progress Reviews should show that the student is above, on or just below their target grades). Consideration will be given to exceptional circumstances for example bereavement or serious illness.

Payment will be stopped where students have been absent for a period of 4 continuous weeks or more (excluding school holidays or if there is evidence of an intention to return to study) and for students who have made a decision to withdraw from a study programme.

The school can take back money from students if they have not spent it for the agreed qualified reason.

Bursary payments, aside from in-kind payments, will be paid via BACS direct into the students bank account.

Please note that the receipt of bursary funding does not affect receipt other means-tested benefits paid to families, such as Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance, Child Benefit, Working Tax Credit and Housing Benefit. However if a student is in receipt of the Disability Living Allowance (or Personal Independence Payments) and Employment Support Allowance or in receipt of Universal Credit, parents can no longer receive certain household/family benefits for that child, such as child benefit.

### **Student Declaration and Application**

The student and their parent/carer will sign a declaration when they apply for either a vulnerable and/or discretionary bursary. We will ask for confirmation that any evidence given in support of the application is correct and complete to the best of their knowledge and ability. Any false or incomplete information which results in an overpayment will mean that the school will stop any future payments and seek repayment of anything paid so far.

The student and their parent/carer will be made aware that by signing the declaration they are agreeing to all the conditions and eligibility criteria of the scheme.

### **How to apply:**

The student and parent/carer should complete and return the attached application, with all the appropriate evidence, by 20 September. Should your financial circumstances change during the academic year you may apply for assistance in the first 2 weeks of the spring and summer terms. All applications will be considered by a School Remissions Panel which will sit in September, January and May. This panel will assess each claim and authorise payments. Approved bursaries will be monitored and evaluated throughout the year and reports given the Remission Panel regarding students who fail to meet the conditions of the bursary.

### **Advice on bank accounts**

Students aged 16 are able to open a bank account, which is offered by 16 members of the British Bankers Association. The basic bank account will allow for receipt of the bursary by cheque, and will allow funds to be withdrawn via ATMs as well as via standing orders and direct debits where necessary.

Where bursary payments are to be made they can only be made payable to the student. Payments may not be made into another person, except in exceptional circumstances where a student is unable to administer their own account.